

TAIWAN'S ENTRY AS AN
OBSERVER TO THE WHO**HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 22, 2003

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, this week, the World Health Organization met in Geneva to discuss its agenda and the tentative observer status of Taiwan into the Organization. This meeting came on the heels of a terrible outbreak now known as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

The people of Taiwan are courageously and resiliently combating this dreadful epidemic. Although their efforts have not gone unheard in the halls of Congress, as my colleagues and I have fought for H.R. 441 and final passage of S. 243, other nations that do not respect basic human rights have opposed the entry of Taiwan into the WHO.

SARS has dreadfully demonstrated to all nations that epidemics do not have borders. Unlike its neighbor to the North, Taiwan is an open and transparent nation that has committed its efforts to truthfully divulging the impact of SARS on its population.

The entry of Taiwan as an observer to the WHO will give its people a superior chance in combating this evil malady. Nations that support freedom, a democratic and transparent form of government must support Taiwan's observer status to the World Health Organization.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my heartfelt sympathy to the people of Taiwan for the profound loss they are experiencing due to the malevolence known as SARS and reiterate my full support for Taiwan's entry as an observer to the WHO.

FACILITIES-BASED COMPETITION
IS GOOD FOR U.S. SECURITY**HON. ROY BLUNT**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 22, 2003

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, the U.S. economy rides on the telecommunications network now more than ever. We are ever more dependent on the Internet and our telecommunications networks to conduct business. This makes our telecommunications infrastructure a potential terrorist target.

One way to guard against the destruction of our telecommunications network is to have multiple, competing networks in place. If one goes down, the other can be used. While telecommunications companies often build in redundancy in their networks, it would be better from a security standpoint to have separate, independently operated networks.

Government policy should encourage facilities-based telecommunications competition. This was one of the main goals of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. A Federal Communications Commission regulation, however, actually discourages facilities-based competition. This regulation known as the Unbundled Network Element Platform (UNE-P) allows a competitor to use an incumbent's network at a steep discount, sometimes up to 55 percent. Since this is a platform, the competitors do not have to build any of their own facilities.

The huge discount makes it much more economical for a competitor to use the incumbent's network than to build its own facilities. It also makes it more difficult for an incumbent to financially justify the expense of deploying new facilities, as competitors will be able to piggyback off the facilities and take customers away from the incumbent, without the competitors spending any money for capital improvements.

The Chairman of the FCC tried to get rid of this policy in February, but was stymied by a 3 to 2 vote of his fellow Commissioners. The FCC needs to rethink this policy. Without competing facilities-based networks available, a major terrorist hit to an incumbent's telecommunications network could bring the U.S. economy to a standstill.

INTRODUCTION OF THE MEDIA
(MAINTAINING AND ENSURING
DIVERSITY AND INTEGRITY ON
THE AIRWAVES) ACT OF 2003**HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 22, 2003

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the "MEDIA (Maintaining and Ensuring Diversity and Integrity on the Airwaves) Act of 2003," legislation that would provide greater protection to small and minority-owned businesses in the media industry.

Access to the media is at the foundation of our democracy. As part of its effort to advance one of its primary strategic goals of promoting competition, diversity and localism, the FCC has strived to ensure that every person has equal access and that small and minority owned businesses are fairly and adequately represented in the media.

To accomplish this objective, under Section 257 of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the FCC is required to identify and eliminate market entry barriers for small telecommunications businesses. Section 257 also requires the FCC to report every three years on any regulations prescribed to eliminate any such barriers. Section 257 was written to ensure that greater consolidation in the media industry would not occur without concern for diversity in ownership and content. Specifically, the section was meant to address barriers involving race and gender discrimination.

The FCC has not yet completed its Section 257 Report to Congress. At the same time, the FCC is one short week away from significantly relaxing its current media ownership rules, which may permit networks to own stations that can reach 90 percent of the nation, allow companies to own three television stations in a market, and abolish the ban on cross-ownership between TV stations and newspapers. These new rules are likely to have significant negative consequences for many small and minority owned businesses, but the FCC has not provided its report demonstrating that it has analyzed the impact on these businesses and has not provided adequate assurance that steps are being taken to eliminate any negative consequences. Adding fuel to the fire, the FCC is embarking on this course without providing any notice and opportunity to respond to the specific rules it is considering.

The MEDIA Act addresses these concerns. First, the Act requires the FCC to publish and seek comment on its proposed rules prior to enactment. Second, responding to the concern that requiring a biennial review places an undue burden on the FCC as well as the many small and minority owned companies who need greater certainty to grow their businesses, the Act instructs the FCC to review its media ownership rules every five years instead of every two years. Third, the Act prevents the FCC from repealing its media ownership rules or approving mergers in excess of \$50 million until it has completed its 2003 Section 257 report to Congress identifying and eliminating market entry barriers for small telecommunications businesses, as well as analyzing how any change of the existing regulations would be consistent with the national policy of promoting diversity and competition and how any change would affect barriers to entry for small businesses.

The vast majority of public responses regarding the FCC's decision to change its media ownership rules have criticized the FCC for so hastily running through the process without affording adequate time for a meaningful analysis and public comment on concerns with the new rules. If the FCC will not Act to ensure that any changes are in the public interest and that small and minority owned businesses are adequately represented in the media, Congress must step in.

I am hopeful that Congress can move quickly to enact this worthwhile and timely legislation.

POSITIVE AGING ACT OF 2003

HON. PATRICK J. KENNEDY

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 22, 2003

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, May is both Mental Health Month and Older Americans Month, and no time to make sure that older adults are getting the mental health care they need. Not only do we owe our seniors dignity and good health, but providing good mental health care to older Americans is good policy. Failure to treat mental disorders leads to functional dependence, nursing homes, poorer health outcomes for other chronic conditions, and suicide.

According to the National Institutes of Health, seniors commit suicide at a higher rate than any other age group. And in 20 percent of those cases, seniors killed themselves the same day they visited their primary care doctor. Seventy percent of senior suicides have been to a primary care physician the same month.

There is a severe misunderstanding of mental illness in older adults, even among those with medical training. The President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health has identified the failure of seniors to receive mental health care as a major problem. The Surgeon General's Report on Mental Health found that almost one in five adults over 55 experiences a specific mental disorder that is not part of the "normal" aging process.

That's why today, my good friend from Maryland, our Minority Whip, and I are introducing the "Positive Aging Act of 2003"—to improve the accessibility and quality of mental